



## Member Profile: ..... Allied Machined Products

Allied Machined Products is a family-owned-and-operated manufacturer of precision machined parts. The company was founded in 1946 in Worcester, Massachusetts, by Louis Weber, who retired in 1965. He was succeeded as president by his son Russell Weber who, in turn, was succeeded in 1987 by his son, current president Peter Weber.

Allied's original location was 4,000 square feet of space in the basement of an old industrial building. In 1962, the company moved to a new 9,000-square-foot facility, building additions in 1975 and 1985. Allied moved to its present location – a new 42,000-square-foot facility in Auburn, Massachusetts – in 1999. Last year, the manufacturer finished a 7,500-square-foot addition, which coincided with the company's 60th anniversary.

Today, with more than 80 employees, Allied Machined Products manufactures its close-tolerance parts, components and assemblies for OEM customers. The ISO 9001:2000-registered company produces those parts from steel, stainless steel, brass and aluminum, as well as a wide range of machinable plastics.

Allied currently serves a wide range of markets, including automotive, recreational vehicles, construction, medical, natural gas, hardware, grinding wheels, audio speakers, cutlery, high-end consumer products and antique automobile restoration.

"We have a lot of capability," says company vice president Joseph Wetton, a grandson of the founder. "We have single- and multiple-spindle automatic screw machines,



as well as CNC Swiss machines, turning machines and machining centers." The company also offers an array of secondary services that includes in-house welding, centerless grinding, broaching, assembly and packaging, as well as outside heat-treating and plating.

Since joining PMPA in 1954, Allied Machined Products has benefited greatly from its membership. "We really take advantage of the information they provide," says Mr. Wetton. "We've used it for help with government regulations, health and safety programs, and machining feeds and speeds on exotic material."

"We probably use the Listserve more than anything," says Ann Weber, treasurer of the company and wife of its president. "Most of us are connected to the Management, Engineering and Quality Listserves."

"It seems that before you even ask a question, somebody out there has already asked it and somebody else has already answered it," Mr. Wetton adds. "Most members



are looking for answers to the same types of questions. The subjects can be as simple as how to clean parts or finding sources for machine parts and repairs. There is a lot of valuable information out there."

Representatives from Allied Machined Products have been attending the PMPA National Technical Conference for about 20 years, according to Mrs. Weber. "For us, the Tech Conference is the most popular of the PMPA events," she says. "We also attend a number of Management Updates and the Annual Meeting."

"We probably send five or six people to the Tech Conference," explains Brad Weber, the fourth generation of the family to work at Allied. "Everyone from the machine setup men to the foreman. At the Tech Conference, you get to know people that are technically your competitors. Yet, they help each other with problems and show what they've done. It's very educational."

All of the company's top executives agree that the best benefit of PMPA membership is the networking. "People in PMPA are a lot freer about sharing information than you'll probably find in any other

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# Assuring The Payback Of Technology Investments

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*This is the first of a two-part article on technology payback. Part 2, entitled "Answers: How?" will appear in the April issue.*

## Part 1: Answers "Why?"

Your shop has good quality; you have a quality management system. Your shop has good reliability; you have management systems for assuring worker safety, scheduling equipment availability and careful stewardship of financial resources.

Your shop has competitive prices; you have implemented best manufacturing practices, including lean operations and reduced machine setup times. Plus, your people are ruthlessly attacking waste.

So, of course you have profits. Ahhh, you do not have a system for assuring profits?

In today's world of increasing prices for supplies and raw materials, one of the best

opportunities to find hidden profits is to assure that our companies are recovering the full, expected payback from our investments in technology. You have systems to monitor raw material costs, inventory turns and machine setup and cycle times. Do you have a system to assure that you are getting a full payback of your investments in technology?

Perhaps your firm has invested in a new EDM capability. Because you can now make your special form tooling in-house, you are able to shorten leadtimes to your customers. Do you have a system that shows *how* you have shortened leadtimes on your current quotes?

Are you currently quoting significantly shorter leadtimes than you had been quoting before the investment? If not, there is no payback, just a higher cost of doing business. Can you show that since you have added the EDM capability, you have a higher rate of successful quotes attributed to the shortened leadtimes? This is profitability engineering at its most basic.

Do you have a system that audits your internal systems (work instructions, process control

plans, routers, and so on) to assure that the newest technology and optimized methods are in place? This is profitability engineering.

Some shops have an accounting means to audit times or costs on a job, cost center or departmental basis. But these are seldom as enlightening as the profitability engineer comparing current performance to prior achievements or the standards used to quote or estimate the job. The study should also include comparison to your shop's current quoted standards. Your shop does have performance standards, doesn't it?

## *Do you have a system that audits your internal systems (work instructions, process control plans, routers, and so on)...?*

Comparison to equipment nameplate capability and purchase order covenants of performance for the equipment involved should also be done. The gap between your technology's capability and its current level of operational attainment is where your hidden profits will be found.

Is there a profitability engineer in your house?

## Allied Machined Products...continued

organization, whether they're a direct competitor of yours or not." says company sales manager Brian Early.

Mr. Wetton summarizes, "If you're having trouble machining a certain type of material or a part, somebody will answer your

question and tell you what they did to solve a similar problem. They'll even tell you where they bought the equipment, how they used it and who to get a hold of. It has always been that way. That's probably the most unique thing about PMPA... the way members share information. Whether it's on

the Listserve, over the phone or at the conferences, information gets shared."

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